Improving Access and Retention for Black and Latino Teachers in K-12 Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Research and Resources for Education Leaders

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ERA Educator Registered
Apprenticeship Intermediary

a new **ERA** in education

About the ERA Intermediary

RTI International leads the Educator Registered Apprenticeship (ERA) Intermediary, with the support of WestEd, New America, and TEACHMEducation. With funding from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), the ERA Intermediary provides technical assistance (TA) to state and local education agencies and their partners on the development of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs in education.

The TA provided by the ERA Intermediary includes opportunities for one-on-one coaching as well as role-alike affinity groups, academies, accelerators, and career fairs. Employer partners who engage in developing an RA program with the support of the ERA Intermediary are also eligible to request incentive funding. For more information about the ERA Intermediary, please visit www.educatorapprenticeships.com ↗ or email educatorapprenticeships@rti.org. For more information about the RA industry partners in your state, see the USDOL Partner Finder website: https://apprenticeship.gov/partner-finder ↗.

About the "A New ERA in Practice" Series

This report is the second in a series of informational products that explore topics related to RA programs in the education sector nationwide.

Contents

Across the United States, individual school districts and state agencies are actively engaged in efforts to expand the educational workforce. This involves a strategic focus on cultivating the teacher pipeline and enhancing the alignment of teachers' racial and ethnic backgrounds with those of their student populations in the communities they serve. To achieve these objectives, states and districts have adopted innovative pathway models, such as the implementation of grow-your-own initiatives, teacher residency programs, and alternative certification processes for individuals changing careers. Many states and districts have used these programs as a foundation for developing Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs in the education sector.

This research brief highlights research and best practices for how RA leaders and partners can recruit and support Black and Latino prospective educators into RA programs in the education sector, such as RA programs for K-12 teachers. Research shows alternative certification pathways such as RA programs have become increasingly common entry points for teachers of color (TOCs). In 2012, for example, nearly half of newly hired Black teachers were certified through an alternative pathway, compared with just 22% of all other first-year teachers.[1] **Making a commitment to developing a robust diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) plan and implementing approaches informed by the research in this brief is one way leaders can cultivate and sustain a racially and ethnically diverse educator workforce.**

The scope of this brief focuses on the body of research around Black and Latino educators in innovative pathway models with a particular emphasis on Black and Latino men who are vastly underrepresented in the current national educator workforce. We did not limit the results of the scan to prospective male educators; however, we have extrapolated findings with an emphasis on Black and Latino men who currently represent 1.3% and 2% of the national elementary and secondary educator workforce, respectively,,,l educa(edasis on)]o men who culv(orkf)4.1 (ed2(orkf)4.1 (o men D 2 89.6357 240EMC [7P /MCID 4 BDC [])Tj9.5 0 05/TT3 1 h6y po[

How This Research Brief Is Organized

This research brief is organized into five domains that emerged as themes from literature on how innovative pathway models have recruited and developed Black and Latino pre-service educators:

- *Creating an Inclusive Environment*

- *Ensuring Diversity in Recruitment and Representation*

- *Addressing Access Barriers*

- *Ensuring Culturally Responsive Curriculum*

- *Measuring DEIA Effectiveness*

Each section is organized and presented with a summary from the research base, research-informed strategies, and reflection questions for RA leaders and core partners (e.g., employer partner/district, organized labor, educator preparation program [EPP]). Using patterns from the research base, we also present a fictional case study designed to illustrate challenges and methods undertaken by a fictitious school district in their efforts to implement an RA program in the education sector with the goal of building a more diverse workforce.

Creating an Inclusive Environment

Creating an inclusive environment for Black and Latino prospective educators in RA programs and in the schools where prospective educators will work is crucial for fostering a diverse and sustained teacher workforce. National data show lower numbers of Black and Latino individuals pursuing careers in teaching and higher turnover rates for those already working in schools. Creating an inclusive environment requires fostering a supportive culture; providing mentorships, supports, and professional development; and training administrators and mentors to support both the recruitment and retention of Black and Latino educators.

Assessing the Current Environment for Teachers of Color

• National data indicate higher turnover rates for Latino and Black teachers than White teachers, with poor working conditions being a common factor. Teacher candidates of color report facing persistent toxic environmental conditions during in-service work experiences, contributing to challenges in teacher retention. A recent study by The Education Trust[6] reveals that Black and Latino teachers feel disrespected and de-professionalized despite their contributions. TOCs sometimes face the need to prove their qualifications and contend with discriminatory thoughts and actions from colleagues. Therefore, creating and sustaining culturally inclusive school cultures is vital for cultivating and supporting a diverse teacher workforce.

• Additionally, before Black and Latino prospective educators make their way into schools and classrooms, many report feeling less welcome than their non-Black counterparts within postsecondary education programs.[7] In one study, Black participants experienced difficulties engaging in conversations about race in their educator preparation coursework, characterizing these dialogues as predominantly "white facing."[8] Some participants felt that programs disproportionately focused on educating White participants about working with students of color and marginalizing or oversimplifying the perspectives of people of color. The lack of support for Black teacher candidates was so significant that it resulted in the resignation of some individuals from their respective programs.

• In research on teacher residency programs with positive and supportive environments, work conditions and climates were found to differ between the residency program and partner school work site. Teacher residency programs, such as those offered by the Black Educator Initiative (BEI), were characterized by positive, healthy climates, with a consistent indicator being the strong sense of support and community provided.[9] However, Black participants reported the same could not be said for their school environments once they began teaching, which led to higher turnover rates.

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> "The Program is doing a very good job of making White people feel comfortable in urban environments, but it's not doing a good enough job of making us feel comfortable. I guess they feel like, because our students are people of color and this is kind of our environment, that we should be okay already."
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> – Black participant in nontraditional preparation pathway[8]

Providing Mentorship, Support, and Professional Development

- Opportunities for collaboration and networking, such as affinity groups or mentoring structures, can enhance support and connection for TOCs. Programs that have robust mentoring, affinity groups, and professional learning experiences have effectively used these industry best practices to attract Black teachers and to bolster program completion. For example, the Brothers Empowered to Teach (BE2T) program in New Orleans, which offers a paid pre-teaching apprenticeship, provides access to mentors through their fellowship program and to culturally responsive professional learning via their "Cipher Series," which draws its name from hip-hop vernacular and pedagogy.[10]

- Ongoing mentorship and support are integral components of successful education programs. Examples include initiatives like Call me MISTER, the Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars Program, The Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice, BE2T, and the Black Teacher Project (BTP) in San Francisco, Oakland, and New York. These programs aim to address the specific needs of Black and Latino men in education and provide mentorship from educators with similar backgrounds.

- Participants in education programs emphasized the critical importance of having race-similar mentors or advisors. Positive experiences with Black mentors and advisors were identified as significant factors in both the recruitment and retention of Black and Latino men in education. The majority of support staff within Chicago's Bilingual Teacher Residency program are Latino and fluent in Spanish, contributing significantly to the comfort and empowerment of prospective educators. While race-similar mentors provide valuable support for new educators, this strategy runs the risk of burdening teachers of color who may be asked to take on multiple mentees in addition to their existing workload. Thus, RA program leaders must consider and plan for how they will support mentors, for example, by providing course release time and financial compensation.

- The Connecticut Teacher Residency Program (CT-TRP) goes beyond traditional mentorship by offering professional development and social opportunities for residents in their first 3 years of teaching. These opportunities include affinity groups, mentorship during the first year of teaching, and support teacher roles in the second year, fostering a supportive community for new educators.

Training for School Administrators and New Teacher Mentors

- To address the challenges faced by TOCs, districts can provide training for school administrators. Administrators play a crucial role in creating environments that encourage TOCs to stay in their respective schools and the profession at large. Lack of culturally affirming school leadership has been identified as a significant factor contributing to high turnover rates for TOC.

- CT-TRP emphasizes equity through self-assessment and training opportunities for partner districts and principals. Similarly, mentor teachers engaged in ongoing cultural competency training, highlighting the program's commitment to creating inclusive environments for teacher candidates.

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> **"Ultimately, teachers of color express that they navigate a workplace that renders their identity, skills, and contributions to the school invisible. They deal with these experiences every day and have to operate in a space where they don't belong."**
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> *– If You Listen, We Will Stay: Why Teachers of Color Leave and How to Disrupt Teacher Turnover* **(2019)**[6]

What Research Says	Research-Informed Strategy	Reflection Questions for RA Program Leaders/Partners
• Higher turnover rates for Latino and Black teachers are often linked to poor working conditions and lack of support. • Teacher candidates of color encounter toxic environmental conditions during pre-service and in-service experiences, contributing to challenges in retention. • Black and Latino teachers feel disrespected and de-professionalized, facing the need to prove qualifications and encountering discrimination from colleagues.	• Ensure school leaders are skilled in implementing culturally responsive leadership and provide ongoing professional development and support for teachers during the first 3 years of teaching. • Highlight the cultural strengths and perspectives of future educators of color in EPPs, rather than focusing on the necessity of "managing challenges" related to educating students of color, many of whom come from the same cultures, families, and communities as TOCs. • Establish affinity groups and mentorship structures to enhance support and connection for TOCs, mitigating the challenges of toxic in-service environments. • Provide race-similar mentors and advisors and require anti-bias professional learning for mentor teachers and school-based instructional coaches.	• What steps are being taken to provide training for school administrators to create inclusive environments? • What structures and processes do we have in place to support teachers during the first 3 years of teaching? • How are we gathering feedback from Black and Latino teachers about the working conditions at their schools? • Do we have Black and Latino mentors and instructional coaches on our staff? • How does our teacher education curriculum or in-service professional learning draw upon the cultural assets and perspectives of educators of color bring to the table? • How can ongoing cultural competency training be integrated for both administrators and mentor teachers to foster inclusive school climates and systemic change?

Ensuring Diversity in Recruitment and Representation

Ensuring the recruitment and representation of educators of color in K-12 Teacher RA programs is imperative for fostering diversity, innovation, and cultural competence in the education system. Once again, teacher residency models offer a blueprint for RA programs to develop diverse apprentice pipelines. Proactive strategies—such as actively seeking individuals engaged in local communities, collaborating with diverse organizations, and using high-touch recruitment approaches—are particularly essential to attract Black and Latino male educators in a field where they are vastly underrepresented. The U.S. Department of Labor has created a range of tools and resources ⧉ to support recruiting diverse apprentices, which we suggest exploring further in addition to the findings highlighted in this research scan.

Proactive, Innovative, and High-Touch Recruitment Approaches

- Schools and districts actively recruited prospective educators, with an emphasis on individuals already engaged in local communities, such as those who work in after-school care programs. Participants in these programs often exhibited a long-term commitment to education solidified through prior work in after-school settings, emphasizing the importance of community involvement.[8]

- Promising recruitment strategies used by the CT-TRP focused on identifying and partnering with organizations boasting diverse memberships, emphasizing financial benefits, and using high-touch practices such as individual follow-ups.[11] Community partners for RA programs may include religious institutions, adult education centers, and workforce development agencies that may already have trust and credibility with Black and Latino members of the community.

- Chicago's Bilingual Teacher Residency program used social media and digital storytelling, contributing to a 20% enrollment rate for candidates discovering the program through these platforms.[12]

- Minneapolis Public Schools employed high-touch recruitment, actively prioritizing applicants of color, building relationships, and offering support to mitigate potential discouragement from applying. Strategies included information sessions, engagement with principals for referrals, and community relationship-building efforts to diversify the pool for the residency program.[1]

- Close collaboration with local EPPs in California's Long Beach Unified School District helped coordinate student teaching placements and pre-employment vetting, which allowed prospective educators to gain knowledge about their future teaching context while the district and EPP worked together to identify strong candidates for teaching positions.[1] K-12 Teacher RA programs should consider developing or working with employer partners to provide opportunities for prospective apprentices to familiarize themselves with the K-12 schools in their local community.

Addressing Compensation Disparities

- Future educators of color are not unique from other educators in emphasizing the need for competitive salaries and acknowledging the financial sacrifices made in education, which is acute for Black and Latino educators and those from underprivileged financial backgrounds who are more likely to incur student debt.[13] As such, researchers and policy makers point to loan forgiveness as another strategy to increase recruitment of future TOCs.[14]

- Lack of parity between job demands and salary is another concern for educators of color. For example, Black male special education teachers cited higher expectations, such as increased paperwork and extended working hours, as considerations that weighed heavily on their decision to enter and remain in the profession.[15] Compensation increases should therefore align with heightened qualification requirements in the field.

Representation and Culturally Competent Selection

- Professional recruitment staff positively correlated with a program's success in attracting Black applicants, as did training and stipends for Black mentors and summer programs specifically designed to recruit Black teachers.[9]

- Alternative certification pathway programs such as the CT-TRP—of which 90% of graduates are persons of color—actively recruited candidates from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds with a demonstrated commitment to diversity in education, often drawing from non-certified staff in partner school districts and the local community. Admission practices prioritized understanding the backgrounds, experiences, and dispositions of prospective educators they sought to recruit.

- Programs that removed the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) requirement for applicants and implemented an asset-based application lens that used a culturally sustaining education rubric saw a substantial boost in enrollment of aspiring teachers identifying as non-White.[16] Similarly, apprenticeship program sponsors routinely refine their entry criteria to align with job successes and inclusivity, ensuring that they fairly evaluate readiness and potential credit for past learning or experience. Apprenticeship programs do this in part through required reviews to improve affirmative action plans, evaluate recruitment success, and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

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What Research Says	Research-Informed Strategy	Reflection Questions for RA Program Leaders/Partners
• Promising recruitment strategies include cultivating relationships with organizations boasting diverse memberships and those already working with communities of color and using high-touch practices such as individual follow-ups. • Professional recruitment staff positively correlated with success in attracting Black applicants, as did training and stipends for Black mentors and summer programs specifically designed to recruit Black teachers. • Culturally competent selection practices such as removing GRE requirements and implementing an asset-based application reduce barriers to recruiting and enrolling prospective educators of color in traditional and innovative teacher certification programs.	• Actively seek prospective educators already engaged in local communities, such as those working in after-school programs. • Identify and partner with organizations or EPPs with diverse memberships students, such as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs). • Use creative recruitment methods, such as social media and digital storytelling, to enhance program visibility and attract diverse candidates. • Offer competitive salaries, especially for special education teachers and other hard-to-fill areas. • Implement inclusive admission practices by removing GRE requirements and using an asset-based application to vet candidates.	• What partnerships are already in place or need to be strengthened to enhance recruitment efforts? What are the experiences of individuals from communities of color with our school district and state education agency? • What innovative methods can be employed, such as social media and digital storytelling, to creatively attract diverse candidates to residency programs? What anti-bias and cultural awareness training do Human Resources and marketing officers receive that informs their work? • How can compensation structures be adjusted to address disparities and attract educators, especially in specialized fields like special education? • What steps can be taken by RA program partners to implement inclusive admission practices, such as removing GRE requirements and using culturally sustaining education rubrics, to ensure a diverse pool of aspiring teachers?

Addressing Access Barriers

Addressing access barriers for educators of color in Teacher RA programs is crucial for inclusivity. Initiatives offering multifaceted support, such as financial assistance and flexible scheduling, prove essential while rethinking admissions criteria and emphasizing nontraditional programs contribute to fair assessments and increased representation.

Financial and Bureaucratic Support

- Challenges in navigating bureaucratic structures, especially in large school systems, may impact aspiring teachers and necessitate deeper support as programs grow in visibility and reach. Programs that aimed to reduce structural barriers to teacher credentialing by providing multifaceted support therefore had greater success.

- Initiatives included test preparation; customized financial support; partnerships with schools, districts, and universities for instruction and job connections; and mentorship opportunities. Notably, coaching from instructors and mentor teachers who identify as people of color is emphasized as contributing to a welcoming and prepared environment, and this is a bureaucratic support cost that educator RA programs should plan for.[8]

- Teacher residents who received discounted tuition, a living wage, and financial support for testing, licensure, and registration costs cited these financial supports as a critical factor in retention.[12] For example, programs like the Maryland Accelerates Program and CT-TRP break down financial barriers by covering tuition costs, providing a living wage during the residency, and supporting candidates in preparing for certification exams. RA programs not only offer apprentices a competitive living wage but also underscore the importance for leaders to strategize sustainable funding mechanisms, which are critical for maintaining and diversifying the apprenticeship talent pipeline.

Rethinking Admissions Criteria

- Rethinking traditional admissions criteria is crucial. The success of residents with lower incoming grade point averages (GPAs) challenges the notion that GPA is an accurate predictor of success in educator apprenticeship programs.[16]

- The use of multiple measures in assessing candidates during the admissions process is essential to identifying effective and committed future teachers. Multiple markers beyond GPA should be considered during the admissions process to identify effective and committed future teachers such as demonstration lessons and interactions with students and staff.[17]

- Relying less on test scores and considering performance-based tasks ensures a fair assessment of candidates of color and enhances the likelihood of hiring the best-fit teachers for schools. RA programs in the education sector should consider a wide range of lived experiences that may contribute to a candidate's success in an RA program—for example, community involvement or prior work with children in after-school, enrichment, sports, or other non-classroom settings.

Flexibility of Nontraditional Programs

- Participants express a strong interest in nontraditional programs, with 61% enrolled in fast-tracked programs with flexible scheduling. One New York teacher residency program in which the majority of participants were people of color structured coursework to meet in the evenings synchronously via Zoom to allow teacher residents to maximize their time in their school settings and help balance their full-time role teaching at their school sites.[16]

- Nontraditional programs often prioritize autonomy in completing licensure requirements and degree programs in ways that align with candidates' schedules and financial considerations.[15] Educator RA programs should work in partnership with a state-approved EPP and state licensing authorities to expand flexible and stackable credentials for apprentices as they work to meet program requirements.

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What Research Says	Research-Informed Strategy	Reflection Questions for RA Program Leaders/Partners
• Navigating bureaucratic structures poses challenges for aspiring TOCs and those from linguistically diverse backgrounds, especially in large school systems, requiring comprehensive support for success. • Successful programs addressing structural barriers to teacher credentialing employ multifaceted support, including test preparation, financial aid, partnerships, and mentorship. • Financial support, including emergency funds, is crucial for entry and retention in apprenticeship programs, highlighting its impact on apprentices' decisions to stay or leave.	• Establish and fund comprehensive support programs addressing bureaucratic challenges for aspiring teachers. • Prioritize mentorship opportunities, particularly with mentors who identify as people of color. • Ensure the provision of emergency funds as a prerequisite for entry and a critical factor in the retention of those in apprenticeship programs. • Re-evaluate traditional admissions criteria, acknowledging the limited predictive value of GPAs and GRE scores. • Design nontraditional programs with flexible scheduling options and allow flexibility in degree programs aligned with personal schedules and financial considerations of participants. For example, consider synchronous evening coursework via platforms like Zoom to maximize participants' time in school settings and balance full-time teaching roles.	• What bureaucratic challenges are presently faced by aspiring teachers in our school system? What supports, if any, do we currently have in place to help individuals navigate the licensure or application process? • How do we recruit, select, and train teacher mentors, particularly Black and Latino individuals? • How can we ensure a culturally responsive and comprehensive assessment of candidates during the admissions process, considering multiple measures beyond GPA?

Ensuring a Culturally Responsive Curriculum

The significance of a culturally responsive curriculum within RA programs cannot be overstated, encompassing the educational content delivered by EPP partners and the environment of the schools where apprentices are placed. Discrepancies between the values imparted during coursework and the actual school culture, along with a lack of diversity in leadership and frustrations arising from non-inclusive curricula, highlight the pressing need for coherent strategies among RA program partners. Aligning these elements is crucial to ensure that the curriculum resonates with and is relevant to Black and Latino apprentices and the diverse communities they serve.

Challenges to Cultural Responsiveness in K-12 Teacher RA Programs and EPPs

- Prospective Black and Latino educators in both traditional and nontraditional educator pathways are often motivated to enter the teaching profession by a desire to address the urgent need for diversity in teaching and a commitment to social justice for children of color.

- Black teacher candidates expressed nuanced challenges in race-related discussions in their EPPs, highlighting dissatisfaction with a disproportionate focus on educating White candidates about working with students of color. This often resulted in overlooking or generalizing the perspectives of candidates of color.[8,6]

- Residents of color identified mismatches between the social justice values of the residency program and the actual climate of the schools where they will work, negatively impacting their assessments of their preparation to teach. Mismatches extended to traditional coursework in EPPs, which conflicted with residency climates oriented toward social justice principles.

Promoting Cultural Competency in the School Environment

- CT-TRP prioritized cultural competence, challenging traditional norms in EPPs that perpetuate dominant White culture. Other apprenticeship programs responded to the nuanced needs of candidates of color by fostering small-group cohorts and affinity groups for Black and Latino male educators, encouraging residents to strategize ways to emphasize their students' strengths, challenging deficit-oriented narratives surrounding their students of color and English learners.

- Some school districts, exemplified by Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky, are actively investing in cultural competency programs for teachers and staff.[1] In CT-TRP, mentor teachers engage in ongoing cultural competency training and learn how to support beginning teachers without reinforcing normalized practices steeped in whiteness.

- One factor cited to draw more Black men to teaching was a desire for professional autonomy, specifically in contextualizing content for Black students so that it was more culturally engaging, underscoring the need for a more diverse curriculum. Moreover, collaborative opportunities for TOCs to contribute actively to the design of culturally responsive curricula emerged as a professional incentive, offering career advancement and contributing to enhanced retention rates. Successful examples, such as providing opportunities for Latino teachers in Arizona to create culturally responsive curricula, demonstrate tangible improvements in reducing burnout, and foster stronger teacher–student connections through shared cultural experiences.[18]

What Research Says	Research-Informed Strategy	Reflection Questions for RA Program Leaders/Partners
• Black and Latino individuals join apprenticeship programs to address the lack of diversity in teaching, driven by a commitment to social justice for children of color. • Black teacher candidates face challenges in race-related discussions in EPPs, expressing dissatisfaction with a disproportionate focus on educating White candidates about working with students of color. • Mismatches between the social justice values of residency programs and actual school climates negatively impact residents' preparation to teach, extending to conflicts with traditional coursework in EPPs.	• Invest in cultural competency programs for teachers and staff and incorporate ongoing cultural competency training for mentor teachers, emphasizing support for beginning teachers without reinforcing normalized practices steeped in whiteness. • Partner with EPPs who are successfully providing culturally responsive coursework and programming leading toward educator certification. • Offer professional incentives for TOCs, including opportunities for professional autonomy and active contribution to the design of culturally responsive curricula.	• How can cultural competency programs be effectively implemented for teachers and staff in our school district? • In what ways can ongoing cultural competency training be integrated into mentor teacher development to better support beginning TOCs? • What strategies do we currently implement—or need to implement—to ensure a more balanced focus on the needs and perspectives of candidates of color in EPPs? • Is there a culturally responsive curriculum in place in our school district and what opportunities exist for educators to shape current curricula so that they better reflect the lived experiences of students from racially and ethnically diverse groups?

Measuring DEIA Effectiveness

Measuring and tracking the effectiveness of DEIA initiatives in teacher apprenticeship programs is crucial for informed decision-making and targeted improvements. Using data analysis, such as examining recruitment, hiring, and retention trends by race, not only refines goals for increasing the representation of educators of color but also ensures that nontraditional pathways, like those with after-school experience, are adequately supported and accounted for in program evaluations.

Defining Goals for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access

- Schools and districts are encouraged to use data to inform the recruitment and selection process. Analyzing recruitment, interview, hiring, retention, and attrition trends by race and other categories enables targeted efforts.

- Data analysis can refine goals for recruiting TOCs, allowing for specific targeting, such as focusing on increasing the representation of Black and Latino male educators. This data-driven approach enhances the effectiveness of DEIA initiatives in RA programs in the education sector.

Missed Opportunities in Tracking Data

- Few states have established goals for increasing the diversity of their teacher workforce and collecting and publishing data on teachers disaggregated by race and linguistic diversity, making it difficult to assess challenges and progress in recruiting prospective educators from these populations.[19]

- RA programs often overlook the tracking of teacher candidates with experience working in after-school programs, limiting targeted support for this population.[8] This emphasizes the importance for K-12 Teacher RA programs to actively track and report individuals with after-school care program work experience.

- New Jersey highlights the lack of data on pathways for teachers without a bachelor's degree, which is particularly concerning for those teaching in private settings and preK, predominantly comprising women of color.[13]

Successful Models of Data Utilization

- CT-TRP showcases success with 65 graduates, over 90% identifying as people of color, serving as culturally sustaining teachers. This approach to data use emphasizes the importance of data in recruitment and selection processes, using it to inform goals, refine strategies, and address trends related to race and other categories of interest.[11]

- States can design data systems to monitor the racial diversity of EPPs' enrollees and completers, such as the Illinois Educator Preparation Profile Continuous Improvement and Accountability System used by the Illinois State Board of Education.[20] This incentivizes EPPs to adopt innovative approaches for recruiting and supporting teacher candidates of color, addressing a crucial first step often overlooked in state pathway policies.

What Research Says	Research-Informed Strategy	Reflection Questions for RA Program Leaders/Partners
• Schools and districts are encouraged to use data to inform the recruitment and selection process, emphasizing the importance of analyzing trends by race for targeted efforts, such as recruiting Black male educators. • States can enhance DEIA initiatives by designing data systems to monitor the racial diversity of EPPs enrollees and completers, incentivizing innovative approaches for recruiting and supporting teacher candidates of color.	• Implement data analysis at all stages of the recruitment and selection process to identify trends by race and other categories. • Use data to tailor recruitment efforts, such as focusing on increasing the representation of Black and Latino male educators or those from other groups based on student and community demographics. • Design and adopt data systems at the state level to monitor the racial diversity of EPPs' enrollees and completers, incentivizing innovative approaches in RA programs for recruiting teacher candidates of color.	• What data do we currently collect at different points in our recruitment and selection processes? How often do we analyze these data, and what interest-holding groups are invited to engage in the data analysis process? • In what ways can we refine our goals for recruiting TOCs based on analysis of current data? • How can we prioritize the collection and reporting of data related to RA programs and nontraditional pathways to enhance our understanding of the diverse landscape of educators?

Using Data to Measure DEIA Effectiveness in Lakewood Teacher Apprentice Program

In the city of Lakewood, the school district faced a critical challenge in recruiting and certifying educators to meet its school district's needs. Recognizing the need for an innovative solution, the district leader, Dr. Nancy Rodriguez, reached out to the State Apprenticeship Agency to collaboratively establish a K-12 Teacher RA program as an on-ramp for prospective teachers that would not only address the teacher shortage in Lakewood but prioritize diversity and inclusion of prospective TOCs.

Driven by a commitment to data-informed decision-making, Dr. Rodriguez conducted a thorough analysis of the district's demographic landscape. Using data from her district, Dr. Rodriguez specifically analyzed the gap between student ethno-racial demographics and those of the current educator pool. The results of this analysis revealed a significant disparity and served as a catalyst for setting specific goals to recruit and hire more TOCs. With the goal of aligning the backgrounds of educators with those of students and families in the district, she recognized the need to recruit and hire Black and Latino educators and those from Spanish-speaking linguistic and cultural communities.

At the outset, Dr. Rodriguez collaborated with community organizations to collect data on the demographics and educational aspirations of the local population. The district used this information to inform targeted recruitment efforts, ensuring that the applicant pool was representative of the diverse communities within Lakewood. Data analytics played a crucial role in identifying underrepresented areas and tailoring high-touch outreach strategies to attract educators of color.

Once the K-12 Teacher RA program was underway, Ms. Sarah Turner, the HR officer, worked closely with Dr. Rodriguez to implement a robust data tracking system for teacher apprentices. They partnered with a state-accredited educator preparation program to offer a cohort-based program for educator apprentices. Using a data-driven continuous improvement process, they collectively monitored the progress of the teacher residents, collecting data on completion rates, coursework performance, and mentorship feedback. These real-time data allowed them to identify successful strategies and areas that required additional support. Regular check-ins and feedback loops ensured that adjustments could be made promptly, addressing any challenges faced by the residents, and refining the program for future cohorts.

Simultaneously, the district leadership recognized the need for bureaucratic supports for prospective educators navigating the complex web of licensure requirements and application processes. Using survey and empathy interview data, the district identified barriers that applicants, especially those from underrepresented and linguistically diverse groups, faced when attempting to engage with the central office and individual schools.

Responding to this insight, Dr. Rodriguez and Ms. Turner collaborated with Mr. Josh Carter, the organized labor representative, to streamline and simplify the application process. This included creating user-friendly guides, providing dedicated support personnel, and offering workshops to demystify the licensure requirements. By aligning these bureaucratic supports with the identified needs, the district aimed to make the pathway to becoming an educator more accessible and equitable.

Ms. Renata Shafi-Lopez, the dedicated mentor and instructional support coach, played a key role in disseminating this information to the apprentices. Her insights from the field, coupled with the data-driven adjustments made by the district, ensured that prospective educators received effective mentorship supports throughout their journey to licensure.

The success of the RA program was evident when, after rigorous training and mentorship, 22 educators of color emerged (60% male) as certified, qualified, and passionate professionals and were employed by the district. The district's proactive response to data insights aligned with a DEIA strategy not only benefitted students but set a precedent for systemic change that prioritized inclusivity and support for educators navigating the licensure pathway.

Conclusion

In summary, this research brief emphasizes the significance of cultivating a racially and ethnically diverse educator workforce through innovative pathway models like K-12 Teacher RA programs. By focusing on recruiting and supporting Black and Latino prospective educators, especially men who are underrepresented in the field, RA program leaders can create more inclusive environments that benefit both educators and the diverse student populations they serve.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor has created a range of tools and resources ☒ to support recruiting and training diverse apprentices. Explore these resources for more information, ideas, and strategies for diversifying the teacher pipeline.

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